

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): A vehicle comprising [[:]] :

- (a.) a chassis;
- (b.) a plurality of wheels mounted to the chassis;
- (c.) an operator compartment supported on the chassis;
- (d.) a battery for providing power to the vehicle;
- (e.) a metal step for supporting an operator of the vehicle when the operator enters or leaves the operator compartment, said step being disposed proximate to the operator compartment and including
 - a tread plate and an electrical resistance heater disposed proximate to the tread plate;
 - a front flange joined to a front side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom, wherein the heater is secured to the front flange; and
- (f.) an electrical circuit connecting the heater to the battery, said electrical circuit being operable to supply power from the battery to the heater, thereby causing the heater to heat the step and melt any snow or ice that may be present on the step.

Claim 15 (original): The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the tread plate has a plurality of drain holes extending therethrough, and wherein the step further comprises a plurality of grip structures extending upwardly from a top surface of the tread plate.

Claim 16 (original): The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the step further comprises a plurality of drain structures extending downwardly from a bottom surface of the tread plate, said drain structures at least partially defining the drain holes.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): The vehicle of claim ~~17~~ 14, wherein the step further comprises:
a rear flange joined to a rear side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom; and
a second electrical resistance heater secured to the rear flange.

Claim 19 (original): The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the heater is secured to a bottom surface of the tread plate.

Claim 20 (original): The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the heater is a thick film heater formed over a bottom surface of the tread plate.

Claim 21 (original): The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the electrical circuit includes a temperature switch that controls the supply of power to the heater.

Claim 22 (original): The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the electrical circuit includes a manual switch that controls the supply of power to the heater, said switch being disposed in the operator compartment of the vehicle.

Claim 23 (currently amended). A heated step assembly for a vehicle, said assembly comprising:

(a.) a battery;

(b.) a step for supporting an operator of the vehicle, said step including:

a metal tread plate with a top surface and a bottom surface, said tread plate having a plurality of drain holes extending therethrough;

a plurality of grip structures extending upwardly from the top surface of the tread plate;

a plurality of drain structures extending downwardly from the bottom surface of the tread plate, said drain structures at least partially defining the drain holes;

a front flange joined to a front side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom, and

an electrical resistance heater disposed proximate to the tread plate and secured to the front flange; and

(c.) an electrical circuit connecting the heater to the battery, said electrical circuit being operable to supply power from the battery to the heater, thereby causing the heater to heat the step and melt any snow or ice that may be present on the step.

Claims 24-25 (canceled)

Claim 26 (currently amended): The heated step assembly of claim 24 23, wherein the heater is secured to the bottom surface of the tread plate.

Claim 27 (original): The heated step assembly of claim 23, wherein the heater is a thick film heater formed over the bottom surface of the tread plate.